



# **\*\*BO TALES\*\***



Vol.2 No.3

The Newsletter of the Original Hobo Nickel Society

Winter 1993

## **Dislocated Elbo Discovered at Lakeland Florida**

Could be work of exiled ruler?

by Chuck "Buddha" Irwin

So mine isn't a BO or Bert. Maybe the art work is a little,, ah,, simple or,, ah,, plain. (Crude, O.K.!!) But it does have prestige and international flare. No ordinary BO. No sir re-BO! I mean re Bob. Not mine! "I" have, in hand, an "El BO!" With a traceable heritage. A "Blueblood" line of royalty no less! And a Bullfighter! Read on.

My El BO was rescued from obscurity during the Lakeland Florida Coin Show September last. At first glance the art work resembles that of a Matador. Research proved my assumption... somewhat.

The coin's condition before carving, perhaps XF. Key words are easy. Espana, Cinco, Centimos. Spain of course! Five and Cents! It's a Spanish nickel! The date, however, fell victim to the graver's tool and rendered it dateless. Not a trace.

At this point, due largely to the condition of the coin I suppose, the assumption was made that it was of a current mintage. Bodacious mistake! Not until researching every at-one-time-or-another Spanish ruled country from Argentina to a Leper colony in Venezuela did the idea dawn. Return to Spain and go beyond the Republic era [1931 - 1939] and into Revolutionary coinage.

Sure 'nuff, there it is. Bronze, three years of issue, catalog value, 12 bucks. Re-BO-search is now becoming fun! New clues and more key words. Alfons? XII. Looking behind the brim, it becomes Alfonso. Turns out there were 13 Alfonsos, not all rulers. Number XII ruled Spain from 1874 to 1885. The coin, however was only minted from 1877 to 1879.

The mint mark! I almost forgot! Thank you Chester Krause and Clifford Mishler for the Standard Catalog of World Coins. On the reverse, below the coat of arms, are the letters OM. These are the initials of mint officials NOT the mint mark. Instead midway near the denticle on either side are two eight pointed stars pinpointing the origin of minting to be Barcelona, Spain.

Bona fied facts. Alfonso XII was proclaimed King on Christmas Eve and the Republic again returned to a Monarchy. Interesting to note, the posthumous son [born after death of the father] of Al the 12th became Alfonso the 13th and wound up being exiled.

Alfonso XII was minted clean cut and truncated. [Shortened, without shoulders.] The engraver, after installing shoulders of course, draped Al in the traditional gold and silver brocade "traje de luces" of the "Matador de toros." For those of you that own ordinary Bo originals this means "suit of lights" and "professional, experienced bullfighter."

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## Dislocated Elbo..... (continued from page 1)

The strange part of the engraving is that such a jacket is only worn by the Matador himself, the "El Bo" of the bullfight. Such a traditional costume should then be accented by specific head gear. A heavy hat of ornate design resembling the bull, with a black cockade [ribbon] is expected. Instead Al's sombrero is of the gaucho style worn by the cowboy of Spain. The dome shaped hat is complete with a studded or braided chin strap. On the left, almost hidden, a plume or perhaps a corsage garnishes the wide upturned brim. This type headdress proves him a Picador, the horseman.

Under the hat on the back of the head the hair is fashioned in a knot. Perhaps this manor of fashion is meant to be a turned up "queue," representing the tail of the bull. Today's hairstyles refer to this knot as a "chignon."

Research revealed the purpose for the Picador and his performance is to weaken the bull's neck muscles. He does this from the back of a heavily padded and BLINDFOLDED horse by repeatedly prodding about the bull's neck and shoulders with a lance. The result is the head and horns hang lower and therefore pose a greater menacing threat to the Matador.

Many other interesting discoveries were made while researching my "El Bo." Exciting histories and colorful cultures were exposed that under ordinary conditions, well, perhaps those doors would have never been opened to me. For example, do you know when bullfights started or how long it has been popular? Do you know if there were ever any bullfights in the United States? How many "Plaza de toros" (bullrings) in Spain? Or why did Spain cease to be a world power anyway. I gained these bits and pieces of knowledge and more! Where? From getting to know my El BO of course!

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Thanks for a great article Buddha! We look forward to hearing from you again soon. -Ed.



Buddha's "El Bo"- A Spanish Nickel of Alfonso XII minted from 1877-79. Photograph by JT Stanton.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuck "Buddha" Irwin is CLM #6 of OHNS and presently serves on the Board of Directors as the Sergeant-At-Arms. He lives in Lantana, Florida with his wife, "Buzz". They have two children, and four grandchildren. He works for IBM as a Senior Automation Machine Technician. In addition to his passion for nickels, (he is presently researching Henning nickels, racketeer nickels and nickels in general), "Buddha" enjoys music and plays the drums.

"Buddha" is a regular at the ANA Summer Conference and has taken the "Super Course" with Mike Fuljenz, U.S. Coin Grading with Bill Fivaz and Don Bonser, J.T. Stanton's course on Errors and Varieties, and Tito Rael's course on the Minting Process.

His unusual sense of humor is a welcome delight for all that know him! He once drove a 1949 black Cadillac Hearse with a coffin in it! ... and he sports a cowboy hat with a fork in the band - which lead to many "road kill" jokes at the Summer Conference. In fact, rumor has it that a dead bird was found in his dorm room..... but that's a story for another issue!

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## **\*\* BITS AND PIECES FROM "Bo-ette" \*\***

Greetings! We have added quite a bit to our Club's treasury through our membership drive, sales of Del Romines' books on Hobo Nickels and club tee shirts.

Presently, we have over 100 regular members, five junior members, and thirteen life members. We have sold out of Del's book and sold 17 tee shirts with \$258.00 going directly into the club's Y.N. scholarship fund.

This July at the A.N.A.'s Summer Conference in Colorado Springs three original Hobo Nickels were auctioned with half the proceeds going to the A.N.A. scholarship fund and half going to the club scholarship fund. We were able to add \$545.00 to our account that more than paid the half scholarship we donated to the A.N.A. this summer. We now have a balance of \$333.00 in the scholarship account.

You can help with this worthwhile endeavor by buying a club tee shirt (\$12.00 - includes postage), making a donation, recruiting new members, or just sending in your membership renewal promptly! Dues are \$10.00 a year for adult members, \$5.00 for junior members (under nineteen) and \$150.00 (this year only!) for Life Members.

In this issue you will find a submission form for authenticating/certifying your collection. Please make as many copies of this form as you need - each coin that you submit should be accompanied by a form. Mail (registered and insured) -

1. hobo nickel (s)
2. form (s)
3. check (made out to the Original Hobo Nickel Society)

directly to the authenticator of your choice. The names and addresses are on the form. The fee for authenticating a hobo nickel for members is \$15.00 with \$5.00 of that going to the society's scholarship fund.

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Now is the time to send in your membership dues for 1994!

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## **A GIFT FROM DEL ROMINES**

Included with this newsletter is a gift from a very special gentleman. Most of us realize that we wouldn't be able to even begin to appreciate hobo nickels if it were not for the extensive research that has been done by HLM #1, Delma K. Romines, author of the now out of print book on Hobo Nickels and related carved buffalo nickels. His research is ongoing and he leaves no stone unturned to discover the history of the individuals that spent their idle hours creating the small artistic discs that we collect today. His insight into the different methods the carvers used is extraordinary; his descriptions are unique.

Del, at his own expense, has provided the members of The Original Hobo Nickel Club with an exclusive supplement to his book. I know you all join the Board of Directors in thanking Del for our holiday gift and for all his efforts on behalf of the club.

We have heard rumors that Del is presently working on a second book on Hobo Nickels. We are all eagerly awaiting further news on its release!

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## **Bo Tales to have new Editor with Spring Issue!**

Don "Bert" Farnsworth, Member #1 will be taking over as Editor with the Spring issue. Don is from Burlington, MA and is a consultant in computer science and has started a part-time coin dealership as "The Nickel Trading Post". He is married with two children, both in college. A regular at the Summer Conference, he says that he will continue to attend and recommends the week of numismatics in Colorado Springs to all collectors. Don collects high grade Jefferson Nickels and, of course, original hobo nickels!

Let's all welcome "Bert" to the Board by sending him lots of good articles for the next newsletter.





## President's Message Winter 1993

### Dallas "Colonel" Shaw



Time has flown by very quickly and it is difficult to believe that this is the last time that I will have the privilege of addressing you this year. I take from my first term a deep sense of appreciation for the many wonderful people it has been my privilege and honor to serve with in furthering the goals of this society. Although, much has been accomplished during our first year, I can take little credit for it, for I was blessed with the efforts of a group of numismatists who were hard working and focused, yet having fun along the way.

We've accomplished all of our first year goals - one of which was the establishment of a registration and certification program for your hobo nickels. I can't emphasize enough, however, that the goal of such a program would not have come to fruition had it not been for the Herculean efforts of two outstanding numismatists - Del Romines and Bill Fivaz. They spared no expense in terms of time, effort and personal funds to get this program up and running. I think that you will agree with me that we owe them a great deal and join me in publicly thanking them for their efforts in this endeavor.

The registration and certification program that has been implemented provides members and non-members an opportunity to get an independent opinion on the authenticity of any hobo carving on a U.S. coin from a nationally recognized authority on the subject. All submissions determined to be an original hobo nickel will receive a registration number, a quality grade and a photograph. However, those submissions determined to be "Neo-Bos" (modern carvings) will receive a certification form and photo, but not a registration number. The cost for this service will be \$15.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-members. All profits from the service will go to the OHNS Scholarship Fund for use in funding the expenses of deserving YN's to attend the annual Summer Conference held at the ANA headquarters in Colorado Springs.

Another important pair of items on the OHNS upcoming calendar is the annual meeting of the

society at the FUN Convention in Orlando and the election of officers. The annual meeting is set for January 6, 1994, at 3:00 p.m. Please join us for this key event. FUN provides the perfect opportunity to take a few days off away from winter and enjoy one of the finest coin shows around, plus meet and get acquainted with members of the society. During our annual meeting the election of officers will take place. This is an important function and I urge you all to take part. Election ballots have been provided to you. Please take a moment and vote. At this point, there are no certainties in the outcome. All offices are open to candidates. If you or someone you know is willing to serve in any of the offices, please let our nomination committee (Pete LaComb, chair, P.O. Box 5354, Jacksonville, FL 32247) know as soon as possible. We welcome new candidates who will bring vitality and new ideas to the board.

Speaking of Orlando, it was my great privilege to present a Hobo Nickel talk to the membership of the Central Florida Coin Club recently. Their enthusiasm and hospitality made the long drive there worthwhile. The talk was well received and there were many questions regarding hobo nickels. I took along a good supply of BO-Tales and membership applications. Hopefully, my humble efforts will result in a number of new members from that outstanding organization.

Finally, I would be extremely remiss if I did not discuss the latest issue of BO-Tales that was edited and published by our hard working secretary/treasurer, Gail Kraljevich. Gail assumed responsibility for this important activity at the eleventh hour and did a magnificent job of putting together a newsletter. If you enjoyed the newsletter as I think you did, drop her a line telling her so. We all owe her a vote of thanks and gratitude.

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*Thanks, Dallas, for your nice comments! Please read the letter that the Central Florida Coin Club sent to Dallas after his talk .... in the LETTERS section.*

## **\*\*LETTERS\*\***

Dear Bo Tales Editor,

And here I thought I had "discovered" the Hobo Museum in Britt, Iowa! (See Del Romines' letter in the fall issue of **\*\*Bo Tales\*\***.)

Britt, a town of 2,133 is located in north-central Iowa (125 miles north of Des Moines on the way to Minneapolis), hosts an annual national hobo convention. There's a parade and free mulligan stew. A king and queen of hoboes are crowned. The 1994 convention is August 12-13.

To commemorate this momentous event, on August 12, 1993 "Money Talks," ANA's daily radio program on the history and lore of money, is airing a show on Hobo nickels (written by Bill Fivaz).

Sincerely,

James "Dictator" Taylor M#58-94

*James is Educational Director of the A.N.A., is an active member of the Original Hobo Nickel Society, and is currently running for Treasurer. His moniker, "Dictator" is unusual. James explains it... "my wife's name is Imelda - the only other Imelda I know was married to an infamous dictator - Marcos." .....That may be true James, but we bet all those Y.N.'s you chaperone at the Summer Conference have another explanation! Thanks for writing. - Ed.*

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The following letter was sent to Dallas "Colonel" Shaw after his talk at the Central Florida Coin Club:

Dear Mr. Shaw,

It is with great pleasure that I enclose a check for \$10 and an application to join the Original Hobo Nickel Society on behalf of the Central Florida Coin Club. It is a small token of appreciation from our club to you for your fine program on October 27, 1993. We are all looking forward to receiving the club's publication on a regular basis.

The Board of Directors of the Central Florida Coin Club and I would like to thank you for the time and effort you gave in order to come all the way to Orlando to give the presentation on Hobo Nickels. It was among the best received programs of the 1993 calendar year.

Yours truly,

William C. Hancock, II  
Vice President, CFCC

*Thanks Bill, and welcome to the club! - Ed.*

## **DEL "SLICKROCK" ROMINES WRITES....**

Apparently "Mess Cook" was hitched up with someone other than the "Bert" in my book. [See article in **\*\*Bo Tales\*\*** Vol. 2 No. 1, April 1993] He claims to have hitched up with Bert in mid 1933, and traveled with him until Fall of 1933. This could not have been Bertrand "Bert" Wiegand. Late in the Fall of 1932, Bert was arrested in Georgia, and spent one full year on the Georgia Chain Gang. He was released in late Fall 1933. I doubt seriously if "Mess Cook" could have mixed up his dates, as graduation year is something which most people do not forget.

According to both "Bo" and "WC", Bert was a very violent person for several years after being released from the chain gang, and showed vile hostility toward everyone. It took Bo quite some time to finally get to be friends with Bert again, and this was in the '40's.

There is also other conflicting information in that article. According to WC, one time only did Bert ever give Bo a clue to his family. The one clue was that his father was a railroad worker from Illinois, and when he got into trouble, he already knew much about the rails, and this made it easier to fade away. The statement about Bert not carving the reverse of a coin is totally incorrect, but just so happens that most of Bert's works were on the obverse (as was possibly 99% of all Hobo Nickel Artists), as he normally carved what people wanted. If they wanted a portrait, why go to the extra time of cutting away a buffalo mass when you already had a partially finished tapestry on the obverse.

The original statements by Bo about Bert always removing LI & Y from LIBERTY have since been totally disproven through sincere and painstaking microscopic study of cut lines, tool marks, etc. As the information in (my) new book states, only a small percentage of Bert's work had his name on it. This was probably at the request of the individual purchasing the coins.

Contrary to the statement of "hours to carve a nickel", both Bo and Tom Deason (Railroad Engineer from Indiana who not only supplied information, but nickels as well) stated that Bert could easily put out a masterpiece in an hour or less. When in demand, Bert could easily put out 10 - 15 coins per day, not a week.

I did find the story very interesting, but *I can not go along with the hobo (mentioned by "Mess Cook") being **THE BERT**, King of the Hobo Nickel Artists.*

Del "Slickrock" Romines

## A.N.A.'s "Money Talks".....

### HOB0 NICKELS

By Bill Fivaz

August 12, 1994

The annual national convention of hoboes is about to convene. It all takes place this weekend in the small Iowa town of Britt. A king and queen will be crowned and feted with a parade and mulligan stew.

What's that you say? This isn't quite your "cup of tea?" Well then, that's because you must not be a collector of hobo nickels.

This is "A-N-A's Money Talks." The year was 1935. The nation was in the midst of the Great Depression. Money was tight - and people did whatever they could, just to exist.

One of the most interesting and creative ways for itinerants, such as hoboes, to survive those tough times was to carve coins - changing a coin's original design into something else.

In 1913, a new five-cent coin was minted - a truly all American piece, designed by James Fraser. It featured the profile of a large Native American's head on the front, and a powerful buffalo on the reverse. Because the designs on this coin, known as the "Buffalo Nickel," had such large figures on both sides - it allowed the carvers a great deal of creative latitude. And did they ever take advantage of it!

The Indian's head was transformed into soldiers, clowns, ladies and even past Presidents - including Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. The most popular subject was an ethnic person, usually wearing a derby and sporting a beard. This whole group of carved five-cent pieces is affectionately referred to as "Hobo Nickels."

While we consider the common "nickel" almost worthless in today's mega-dollar economy, it was a considerable sum in the '30's - when one of these unique carved coins could be bartered for a night's lodging or a hot meal.

Some hoboes were more skilled and creative than others, and a few even signed or initialed their works. A few may be found with the buffalo carved into a donkey, an elephant, a turtle - or, in one case, the undeniable bust of Mark Twain!

So if you see an odd-looking carved nickel in your grandmother's jewelry box, don't think too lightly of it. Chances are it once meant that a hobo had a warm place to sleep for the night - or some good home cooking from your kin-folk!

This has been "Money Talks." Today's program was written by Bill Fivaz.

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*"Money Talks" is a daily, two minute radio program on the history and lore of money. It is not about investing; rather it's anecdotes about money, grounded in historic, cultural and economic settings.*

*Shows are built around three themes:*

- this day in history*
- today's holiday or holy day*
- this day in the history of money*

*"Money Talks" is produced by James "Dictator" Taylor, Educational Director of the American Numismatic Association. If you are interested in writing a script for "Money Talks," or proposing a topic, please contact "Dictator" at the A.N.A. 818 North Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903-3279.*

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## A Photograph Offer From Bill "Zemo" Fivaz....

Due to the many requests for **COLOR ENLARGEMENTS** of various high quality Hobo Nickel carvings (mostly those of "Bo" and "Bert"), I am pleased to offer the following subjects in the listed sizes.

If there is a specific carving or subject that you have seen in one of my slide presentations that you would like to have and it is **not** listed here, I would be glad to have the appropriate enlargement made for you at the same price.

Your cost, (**postage is included**) would be:

|                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 5" X 7" .....                    | \$ 5.00 each |
| 8" X 10" .....                   | 10.00 each   |
| 11" X 14" .....                  | 25.00 each   |
| 12" X 18" >                      |              |
| 16" X 20" > (Poster Prints)..... | 35.00 each   |
| 20" X 30" >                      |              |



*The famous "Cameo Boxcar with Hoboes."*

The following subjects are available:

1. Self portrait (cameo) of "Bo" in later years; signed and dated "GH 50".
2. Cameo of "Bert" by Bo; signed and dated "Bert GH 50".
3. Cameo of Monique's Sugardaddy by Bo; signed and dated "GH 50".
4. Cameo of Lincoln by Bo; signed and dated "GH 50".
5. Cameo of Washington by Bo; signed and dated "GH 50".
6. Cameo of Kaiser Wilhelm by Bo; signed and dated "GH 50".
7. Cameo of clown by Bo; signed and dated "GH 50".
8. Cameo of famous clown Emmet Kelly by Bo; signed and dated "E. Kelly GH 50".
9. Cameo donkey (mule) reverse by Bo
10. Cameo turtle reverse by Bo
11. Cameo Horsehead reverse by Bo
12. Cameo Mark Twain reverse by Bo
13. Cameo Hobo with "bindlestick", torn coat with kerchief, hat, "Tired" engraved by stick and "UNITED" left on coin.
14. Cameo caddy with cutaway tuxedo coat on, holding #9 flag and bag of clubs on back.
15. Cameo Boxcar with hoboes on reverse. (see above)

Please order by **number and name** and send your check to:

Bill Fivaz  
P.O Box 888660  
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Guaranteed satisfaction. These are **super** for framing for your den, coin room or office. Please give me about 3 weeks to get the enlargements to you as each is a special order. Thanks.

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## SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 1994

**President** .....Dallas "Colonel" Shaw

Dallas was born and raised in rural north Florida, and now lives in Palatka with his wife Mary "Scrub" Shaw. They are both retired Army "lifers". (please see Profiles in Vol 2 No 1 of **Bo Tales**) Dallas has been very instrumental in the formation and continuation of the Original Hobo Nickel Society. Without his strong leadership, we could not have accomplished the goals of our first year, or weathered some of our "growing pains." The Board of Directors is delighted that "Colonel" has decided to run for another term and highly recommends that he receive your support.

**Vice-President** .....Bill "Zemo" Fivaz

Bill was born in Fulton, New York back when hoboos were still carving Buffalo Nickels. He married his wife Marilyn right out of college and this July will celebrate 38 years of wedded bliss. They have a rather unusual way of celebrating - Marilyn stays home in Atlanta, Georgia and Bill goes to Colorado to teach the Summer Conference course on Grading. Last summer when Bill opened the card that Marilyn had packed for him - it was the same card that he had left home for her! How's that for being in sync!

Bill mailed to the Editor a full page of his accomplishments for this short biography - but you already know and love Bill and will vote for him no matter what is written here!

The Board of Directors is honored that Bill, one of our strongest supporters and leaders, has consented to run for another term.

**Secretary** .....Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich

Gail is happiest when she is working with teenagers - her own two included. During the day she can be found at the front desk in the administration building of a college preparatory high school in Malvern, Pennsylvania, or back stage working with the drama club. In the summer she plays "Mom" to the Y.N.'s at the Summer Conference in Colorado Springs and at various conventions. Introduced to coins by her son John "Junior" Kraljevich (A.N.A.'s winner of the Y.N. of the Year Award for 1993), she has now been bitten by the numismatic bug and enjoys traveling across the country with John.

"Bo-ette" has served as Treasurer, and took over as Secretary and Editor of **Bo Tales** during the first year of the club. She would now like your support as she runs for Secretary.

**Treasurer** .....James "Dictator" Taylor

James is Educational Director of the A.N.A. and makes his home in Colorado Springs with his wife Imelda and their children. During his career, James has done everything from teaching geography in a Chicago high school, running a tour business, doing research at the Harvard Law Review, to managing the research and teaching departments of the University of Denver Medical School in Denver before accepting the position with the American Numismatic Association.

While at the A.N.A., he has totally overhauled the correspondence course, introduced and orchestrated the World Series of Numismatics, run the very successful Summer Educational Conference (including staying in the dorm with all the Y.N.'s!) produced videos on grading and collecting and presently is producing the radio series "Money Talks" for educational radio and computers.

The Board of Directors is 100% behind this new addition to the slate of officers.

**Sergeant-At-Arms** .....Chuck "Buddha" Irwin

"Buddha" is the author of our cover story, and his biography can be found on the second page of this newsletter. He has been with the Society since the first organizational meeting in Colorado Springs, and is an asset to the Board. He deserves your full support.

Please make your feelings on these and any other candidates you may wish to nominate known to the Board **BEFORE** the Annual Meeting in Orlando at the F.U.N. Convention this January.





# THE ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 43  
MALVERN, PA 19355



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

MONIKER (NICKNAME) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE CONSIDER ME FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORIGINAL HOBO  
NICKEL SOCIETY, INC. AS INDICATED:

OR

\_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE RENEW MEMBERSHIP NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ AS INDICATED:

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
REGULAR MEMBER (ONE YEAR) ..... \$10.00

\_\_\_\_\_  
YOUTH MEMBER (UNDER 19 YEARS OF AGE) ..... \$5.00

I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE SOCIETY'S CODE OF ETHICS.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

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**YOUR BOARD.....**

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Sergeant-At-Arms ..... Chuck "Buddha" Irwin  
Editor, Bo Tales ..... Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich  
  
Honorary Vice President ..... Del "Slickrock" Romines

**COMMITTEES.....**

Nomination ..... Pete "Picker" LaComb  
Don "H2O" Haley  
Ed "Baldy" Filipowski  
  
Authentication ..... Del "Slickrock" Romines  
Bill "Zemo" Fivaz  
  
Education .....Don "Bert" Farnsworth  
  
Publicity ..... Richard "Paladin" Schemmer

**\*\*BO TALES\*\***

*The Newsletter of the...*

**ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY**

P.O. BOX 43

MALVERN, PA 19355